



## Youth Protection Training Module

### 1. Training Overview

Child abuse is all too prevalent in our society. We must recognize that there are people in our midst that harm children - people that we know and trust. Each of us has a responsibility to protect children and to foster a safe environment.

This training module was created to increase the awareness of and educate our volunteers. This training module is also a statement that Pony Club takes this problem seriously and will not tolerate abuse or neglect. We intend to send a loud and clear message that will deter potential perpetrators from becoming involved with Pony Club.

This training module has seven sections, including this Overview. There is a quiz to test your retention of the material. The approximate time needed for completion is 60 minutes, a small fraction of time in light of the potential benefit of preventing future child abuse or neglect.

### 2. Definitions

#### a. Child Abuse and Neglect

Each State provides its own definitions of child abuse and neglect based on minimum standards set by Federal law. Copy and paste the following link into your browser to learn the laws in your state:

[http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)

The federal Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA), 42 U.S.C. § 5106g, as amended by the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum:

- Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or
- An act or failure to act which presents as imminent risk or serious harm.

**Neglect** (78.3% of reported abuse) is the failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide for a child's basic needs. Neglect may be: physical (food, shelter, lack of appropriate supervision); medical (failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment or intervention); educational (failure to tend to a child's educational needs); or emotional (inattention to a child's emotional needs, allowing a child to use alcohol or other drugs).

**Physical abuse** (10.8% of reported abuse) is non-accidental physical injury, which ranges from minor to serious injuries or death as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, or otherwise harming a child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child. Physical abuse can be the result of any act (hitting, shaking, burning, biting as examples) that is inflicted by a person who has responsibility for the child at the time of the incident. Physical discipline, such as spanking or paddling, is not considered abuse as long as it is reasonable and causes no bodily injury to the child.

**Emotional abuse** (or psychological abuse 7.6% of reported abuse) is a pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. This may include constant criticism, threats, or rejection, as well as withholding love, support, or guidance. Emotional abuse is often difficult to prove and, therefore, child protective services may not be able to intervene without evidence of harm or mental injury to the child. Emotional abuse is almost always present when other forms are identified.

**Sexual Abuse** (7.6% of reported abuse) - Any sex act between an adult and minor or between two minors when one exerts power over the other. Sexual abuse may include forcing, coercing, or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act, physical or non-contact. Non-contact acts include exhibitionism, pornography and voyeurism, communicating in sexual manner by phone, texting or Internet.

**a. Bullying and Harassing**

Bullying has received more attention in recent years. It is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not "just messing around", and it is not something to grow out of. Bullying can be at the hands of one individual or by a group of individuals who "band" together to bully an individual. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is intentional, hurtful (physical and psychological), and/or threatening and persistent (repeated). There is an imbalance of strength (power and dominance).

The above definition includes the following criteria:

- Mistreatment must be intentional.
- Mistreatment must be hurtful (physical or psychological).
- Mistreatment is threatening. The individual fears harm or fear their safety.
- Mistreatment must occur more than once. However, some disagree with this. They say that one hurtful event is enough to label it bullying.
- There must be a power imbalance

Bullying can take many forms. Examples include:

- Verbal: Name-calling, teasing.
- Social: spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships.
- Physical: hitting, punching, shoving.
- Cyberbullying: using the Internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to harm others.

#### **Chilling facts:**

- Child abuse occurs at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.
- There are over 3 million reports of child abuse made each year.
- Those who sexually abuse children are drawn to settings where they can gain easy access to children such as sport groups, faith centers, clubs, schools.
- It is believed that as many as 30% of all teen suicides are directly related to bullying.

### **3. Statistics**

- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds.
- Most cases of abuse or maltreatment are not reported.

- The greatest risk to children comes from family and friends.
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused by the age of 18.
- 1 in 5 under the age of 18 are sexually solicited on the Internet.
- The greatest risk comes from family and friends:
  - 50% of child abuse victims are abused by people the family trusts.
  - More than 90% of sexual abuse victims know their abuser in some way.
  - 30 - 40% are sexually abused by a family member.
- 59% of perpetrators are women.
- Nearly 40% of sexually abused children are abused by older/larger children
- 88% of sexual abuse cases go unreported
- Almost 30 percent of youth in the United States (or over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both.
- Those who are bullied are more likely to retaliate through extremely violent measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied.
- As of April 2011 there were only 4 states that had not enacted laws that address bullying in schools as a direct result of the Columbine School massacre.

#### **4. Pony Club Policies**

##### **a. #0721 Background Checks for Volunteers**

In order to provide the membership of the USPC, Inc. with high quality adult leadership, USPC is committed to creating a secure environment for our volunteer leaders as well as our youth members, and background screening is an integral part of our due diligence process and risk management procedures.

Prior to assuming duties, USPC volunteers will be required to submit and pass a periodic background check. The background check must be repeated at least every two years.

USPC volunteer leaders required to submit to a background check include, but are not limited to Board of Governors, Advisory members, International Exchange Coaches & Chaperones, National Examiners (NEs) and Apprentices, Chief Horse Management Judges (CHMJJs), Regional Supervisors (RSs), and Vice RSs, District Commissioners(DCs) and Joint-DCs, Center Administrators (CAs) and assistant CAs, Activities & Instruction Committee Chairs, NYC Committee Members, Visiting Instructors

**b. #0111 Youth Protection (to be put before Board of Governors Jan 2012)**

USPC is committed to providing a safe environment for its members and volunteers. A safe environment is one that is free of physical or sexual abuse, verbal or physical bullying, threats, harassment and physical violence.

USPC will:

- Promote and implement appropriate procedures to safeguard the well being of youth members and protect them from abuse.
- Train staff and volunteers who will be in direct contact with youth members regarding best practices to safeguard youth members from abuse.
- Respond immediately to any allegations of misconduct or abuse and report such allegations as per the procedure outlined in Attachment A.

Volunteers must comply with the requirements for Background Checks as stated in USPC Policy 0721.

Staff and Volunteers who work directly with youth members will be required to complete the Child Protection Training Module prior to assuming their position.

This training must be repeated every two years, or as required by USPC when any revisions are made to the training module.

## 5. Best Practices

Although you might encounter, and should be aware of the signs of neglect, physical and emotional abuse, this section will focus on sexual abuse and molestation.

As a responsible adult it is imperative that you take measures to create a safe environment for our members. Following these best practices serves to protect our youth members, you and other adults who are working with our youth members.

- Minimize opportunities for sexual abuse/molestation: eliminate or reduce 1 on 1 situations. Perpetrators seek out situations where they can be alone with potential victims.
- Two deep: avoid situations where members are left with one adult. There should always be a ratio of 2 adults, who are not related to each other, to one child.
- One on one situations: in situations that a 1 on 1 interaction is required between an adult and a member, the interaction should be in a location that is visible to other adults and that is easily interrupted.
- It is acceptable for one adult to be left a small group of children provided that the location of the activity is visible to others.
- If a meeting has ended and one member has yet to be picked up, be sure to have another adult wait with you for the parents. Do not drive that child home without the specific permission of the parent(s) and without another adult present in the vehicle.
- In situations where members may be changing clothing, adults must be respectful of privacy and not intrude unless there is risk to their well being (rally tack rooms, overnight activities are situations where this might arise).
- In overnight situations, two adults of the same gender as participants should share the sleeping space with the participants.
- A buddy system of 3 members should be enforced for rest room use and shower time.
- Adults should shower before or after members, never with them.



## **6. Respond / Report**

### **Why Should You Respond?**

The primary reason for responding to suspected or alleged child abuse or neglect is to protect the child from further abuse or neglect. Your actions may also protect other children from the same treatment and may serve to get the perpetrator needed help.

Reporting alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect is a very deliberate choice on your part and one that will help to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

### **What should I do if I observe an in act of inappropriate or illegal sexual nature?**

If you should observe an act of an inappropriate or illegal sexual nature you should take immediate steps to intervene, provided you will not put yourself or the child at risk for harm. In situations that you believe a child's well-being is in danger you should dial 911 for immediate help.

### **Stay alert:**

"Follow your gut instincts". If you are uncomfortable with a situation, then chances are good that the member is too. Intervene by putting a stop to it or joining in the situation so that the member has another adult there as support.

Be aware of signs that may indicate a member has been or is being abused or sexually molested. Common signs to be aware of include:

- Sudden changes in behavior
- Always watchful, as though anticipating something is going to happen
- Overly compliant, passive or withdrawn
- Arrives at activities early and stays late. Does not want to go home.
- History of frequent injuries or unexplained injuries or bruising
- Behavior indicating fear of a specific adult (parent or other adult)
- Sudden difficulty walking or sitting

**Note:** The presence of a single sign does not necessarily indicate there is child abuse or neglect, but if observed repeatedly or regularly may be cause for concern.

If a member confides in you that he/she has been or is being abused in any way, you should:

- Remain calm and do not overreact.
- Believe the child and be supportive to the child.
- Listen to the child and rephrase important statements to make sure that you correctly understand what she or he is saying to you.
- Reassure the child that help is available and that they are not to blame for this.
- In most cases following your instincts will lead you to say the right thing.

Research suggests that the intervention of a nurturing and trusted adult, who takes the necessary steps to support an abused child, is instrumental in protecting the child from future abuse and in helping to break the cycle of abused children becoming abusive parents.

**Do I have to report concerns of suspicions? Who do I report my concerns to? Am I protected if I file a report and it is "unfounded"?**

If you have observed any of the signs listed above, have reason to suspect that a member may be in an abusive or neglectful situation, or have been taken into confidence by a member who is being abused; you may be legally obligated to report this to the proper local authorities. If you are not legally bound, you still have the moral obligation to make a choice that could make a big difference on the future of a child. Let the local authorities be the ones to proceed with this information as they determine is appropriate. You have done your moral duty and put this in the hands of the proper authorities.

If you have contacted the local authorities, you should also inform your RS, the VP of Regional Administration or Pony Club's Executive Director of this situation.

Each state provides the definition of child abuse and neglect on which all allegations are judged, although most states use the definition as put forth in CAPTA as a minimum. Most, if not all, states provide immunity from civil and criminal liability for persons who make a good faith report of suspected abuse or neglect. Every state has what is referred to as "mandatory reporters" which means that persons in specific roles or jobs



are required by law to report suspected or alleged child abuse and neglect. Pony Club volunteers may or may not be required by law to report suspected or alleged abuse/neglect.

To learn the laws specific to your state go to:

[http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws\\_policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/)

From this site you can check the state's definition, requirements for mandatory reporting, immunity for reporting and penalties for failing to report (if deemed a mandatory reporter).

### **What should I do if I observe behavior that I believe is bullying?**

If you observe behavior that you believe is bullying, you should immediately intervene to stop the behavior so that it does not escalate.

- Identify the specific behavior observed and emphasize that this behavior is unacceptable and that the bullier is responsible for his / her behavior.
- Calmly communicate that you value the member but that the observed behavior cannot and will not be tolerated.
- Make it clear that you will address the behavior in private to allow the bully to save face and increase the chance that they will be receptive to your redirection.

### **What should I do if a member reports that he/she is being bullied?**

If a member reports that another member is bullying him/her, listen carefully to what they have to say. Carefully gather what information you can before jumping to any conclusions. Be careful that you do not make the member feel cut off from further communication with you.

## **7. Summary**

Child abuse and neglect is a community-wide problem that has no barriers. Abuse and neglect occur at every socioeconomic level, across ethnic and cultural lines, within all religions and at all levels of education.

Research has shown that increased awareness and education on the matter of child abuse and prevention is the first step towards breaking the cycle of abuse.

Pony Club is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that is safe for members and volunteers while building a culture of health, wellness and respect. This training module demonstrates Pony Club's commitment to this goal.

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## **Source Materials**

[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

[www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

Child Welfare Fact Sheet at [www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.cfm)

[www.bullyfree.com](http://www.bullyfree.com)

[www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

Darkness to Light; End Child Sexual Abuse at [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)

Snyder, Howard, N. (2000, July), [Sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement: victim, incident, and offender characteristics](http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf) at <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>

[www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/bullying/state-bullying-laws/state-bullying-laws.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/bullying/state-bullying-laws/state-bullying-laws.pdf)

[www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm)

[http://ucanr.org/sites/SafeSpaces/Respond to Child Abuse](http://ucanr.org/sites/SafeSpaces/Respond%20to%20Child%20Abuse)